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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claim 35, without prejudice, and amend the claims as follows:

1. (canceled)

2. (canceled)

3. (previously presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein when exiting from the media nozzle the media flow is enveloped by an oxygen-containing working gas flow.

4. (previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein the working gas flow turbulently exits from a first working gas nozzle of the deposition burner that is designed as a diffuser.

5. (previously presented) The method according to claim 4, wherein when exiting from the working gas nozzle the working gas flow is enveloped by at least one oxygen-containing separating gas flow exiting from an annular gap nozzle coaxially surrounding the working gas nozzle.

6. (previously presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein the plasma zone is

produced by high-frequency excitation inside a burner tube into which a mixture of media flow and working gas flow is introduced.

7. (previously presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the glass starting material in the media flow contains silicon tetrachloride ($SiCl_4$) and the carrier gas is nitrogen.

8. (previously presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the glass starting material contains a fluorine-containing component.

9. to 21. (canceled)

22. (previously presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the multi-nozzle deposition burner includes a plurality of additional nozzles, said additional nozzles having cylindrical walls concentric with and surrounding the media nozzle, said cylindrical walls of the additional nozzles defining annular gaps between each other and around the media nozzle.

23. (previously presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the media nozzle tapers in a tapering portion towards the plasma zone.

24. (currently amended) A method for producing a preform from synthetic quartz glass by a

plasma-assisted deposition process, said method comprising: supplying a hydrogen-free media flow containing a glass starting material and a carrier gas to a multi-nozzle deposition burner, introducing the glass starting material by the deposition burner into a plasma zone wherein the glass starting material is oxidized so as to form SiO_2 particles, and depositing the SiO_2 particles on a deposition surface while being directly vitrified, wherein the deposition burner focuses the media flow towards the plasma zone, and wherein the deposition burner includes a media nozzle that focuses the media flow onto the plasma zone, said media nozzle having a wall defining a passage therein communicating with a nozzle opening so that media flow passes through the passage and through the nozzle opening **<u>to the plasma zone</u>**, said wall being configured so that, adjacent to the nozzle opening, the passage tapers **<u>inwardly</u>** in the direction of the plasma zone, **<u>and</u>** ~~**wherein**~~ the tapering portion has a length of at least 5 mm.

25. (previously presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the length of the tapering area is at least 8 mm.

26. (currently amended) A method for producing a preform from synthetic quartz glass by a plasma-assisted deposition process, said method comprising: supplying a hydrogen-free media flow containing a glass starting material and a carrier gas to a multi-nozzle deposition burner, introducing the glass starting material by the deposition burner into a plasma zone wherein the glass starting material is oxidized so as to form SiO_2 particles, and depositing the SiO_2 particles on a deposition surface while being directly vitrified,

wherein the deposition burner focuses the media flow towards the plasma zone, and wherein the deposition burner includes a media nozzle that **tapers in a tapering portion towards the plasma zone and** focuses the media flow onto the plasma zone, said media nozzle having a wall defining a passage therein communicating with a nozzle opening so that media flow passes through the passage and through the nozzle opening **to the plasma zone**, said wall being configured so that, adjacent to the nozzle opening, the passage tapers **inwardly** in the direction of the plasma zone, wherein the nozzle opening ranges between 4.5 mm and 6.5 mm in diameter.

27. (previously presented) The method according to claim 26, wherein the nozzle opening ranges between 5.0 mm and 6.5 mm in diameter.

28. (previously presented) The method according to claim 26, wherein when exiting from the media nozzle the media flow is enveloped by an oxygen-containing working gas flow.

29. (previously presented) The method according to claim 28, wherein the working gas flow turbulently exits from a first working gas nozzle of the deposition burner that is designed as a diffuser.

30. (previously presented) The method according to claim 29, wherein when exiting from the working gas nozzle the working gas flow is enveloped by at least one oxygen-

containing separating gas flow exiting from an annular gap nozzle coaxially surrounding the working gas nozzle.

31. (previously presented) The method according to claim 28, wherein the plasma zone is produced by high-frequency excitation inside a burner tube into which a mixture of media flow and working gas flow is introduced.

32. (previously presented) The method according to claim 26, wherein the glass starting material in the media flow contains silicon tetrachloride ($SiCl_4$) and the carrier gas is nitrogen.

33. (previously presented) The method according to claim 26, wherein the glass starting material contains a fluorine-containing component.

34. (previously presented) The method according to claim 26, wherein the multi-nozzle deposition burner includes a plurality of additional nozzles, said additional nozzles having cylindrical walls concentric with and surrounding the media nozzle, said cylindrical walls of the additional nozzles defining annular gaps between each other and around the media nozzle.

35. (canceled) ~~**The method according to claim 26, wherein the media nozzle tapers in a tapering portion towards the plasma zone.**~~

36. (previously presented) The method according to claim 24, wherein the nozzle opening ranges between 4.5 mm and 6.5 mm in diameter.